

The Times recommends: Raquel Montoya-Lewis for Supreme Court, Position 3

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Raquel Montoya-Lewis

By [The Seattle Times editorial board](#)

Voters are fortunate to have a choice between two fine candidates for Washington Supreme Court Position 3.

Both are respected, qualified jurists, with rich civic resumes and community contributions. But the appointed incumbent, Raquel Montoya-Lewis, has the edge for her experiences in a county superior court and tribal court systems.

In December, Gov. Jay Inslee appointed Whatcom County Superior Court Judge Montoya-Lewis to the seat vacated by former Chief Justice Mary Fairhurst, who retired for medical reasons. Fairhurst has endorsed Montoya-Lewis.

She had served on the Whatcom County Superior Court bench since 2015. Before that, she was chief judge for the Lummi Nation, Upper Skagit and Nooksack Indian tribes. Montoya-Lewis, who is from the Pueblo of Isleta and the Pueblo of Laguna Indian tribes, is the first Native American to serve on the state's high court.

The King County Bar Association has rated her exceptionally well qualified, while her opponent, Judge Dave Larson, is considered qualified.

Larson, has been the presiding judge of the Federal Way Municipal Court since 2008 and has worked to advance public understanding about the courts. In 2016, The Seattle Times editorial board endorsed Larson for another high court seat over an incumbent justice because of his practical understanding of education issues — he was previously a member, and president, of the Federal Way School Board. He was a trial lawyer for 23 years.

Washington residents would be well served by either of these jurists. But Montoya-Lewis' broader experience gives her the edge.

Correction: This editorial was updated at 8:30 p.m, Oct. 9, 2020, to correct Judge Dave Larson's rating from the Washington State Bar Association.

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